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Identical letters dated 31 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to yet another provocative action by the Republic of Turkey against the Republic of Cyprus, specifically the threats and attempted intimidations contained in a statement issued by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 30 January 2007 regarding the Cyprus Government's decision to initiate procedures for oil and gas drilling on the continental shelf of Cyprus and other activities within its exclusive economic zone. It should be stressed that the relevant decisions of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus are in full conformity with its sovereign rights stemming from the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The said statement of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which it has formalized an unprecedented campaign of disconcerting and tension-oriented articles published recently in the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot press on this issue, following a similarly provocative declaration by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat, constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus. Moreover it constitutes not only a dangerous provocation and a threat to the regional peace and stability, but also an unconcealed and irresponsible violation of fundamental principles of international law, of norms of jus cogens and of the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

In fact, the Charter of the United Nations upholds in no uncertain terms the prohibition of the threat or the use of force in international relations, principle that has acquired the status of peremptory norm of general international law (jus cogens). The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, and all Members, in order to ensure themselves the rights and the benefits resulting from membership, must fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter.

All States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and from any intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

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Having already flagrantly violated these very principles and norms in 1974, Turkey prefers to be oblivious to the fact that the international community has clearly rejected and refused to accept the faits accomplis of its illegal military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and its attempts to destroy a member of the United Nations, namely the Republic of Cyprus, through the establishment of the purported state of the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". In fact, with resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), the Security Council called for the respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Cyprus and considered the declaration, which purported to create an independent state in northern Cyprus, as legally invalid.

Instead of implementing these Security Council resolutions and complying with the international law, Turkey prefers to insist on its attempts to erode the said resolutions and upgrade the status of the illegal entity in occupied Cyprus, by now claiming that the legally invalid "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" has a say and legal rights over the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that Turkey's claim of rights and interests on the question of oil and natural gas in the continental shelf or the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus have no foundation in international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Such a claim is a sheer manifestation of the arrogant behaviour of a country which asserts might as right. It reveals the real motives of Turkish policy towards Cyprus, which are not the often-proclaimed protection of the Turkish Cypriots, but the furtherance of Turkish expansionist designs and exploitation of the natural resources of Cyprus.

In addition, Turkey has no right whatsoever to challenge the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone or the continental shelf between the Republic of Cyprus and its neighbouring States, in accordance with relevant provisions of international law and in areas that are neither opposite nor adjacent to Turkish coasts. It is a well-known fact that Turkey stands as an exception within the international community by being against and not respecting the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which constitutes the codification of customary international law.

In that respect, the Government of Cyprus has no doubts about the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus over the maritime areas surrounding the island and the natural resources therein and rejects any claim by the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the contrary. It should be emphasized that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus is resolved to protect its rights through all appropriate channels, including recourse to the Security Council and/or other international organs.

As far as the tardy alleged sensitivities of the Republic of Turkey about the solution of the Cyprus problem, which are expressed in the aforementioned statement of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it should be noted that this goal is not going to be achieved through the display of Turkish belligerence, threats and blackmails, but through the demonstration of the necessary political will.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Andreas D. **Mavroyiannis**